Goals and Rationale
Bryn Mawr’s international strengths are long-standing and exceptional. They spread widely across the College, offering students a depth and array normally found only at institutions twice our size or larger. An increasingly globalized world, however, asks the College to think once again about how to apply these strengths to the present moment.

In this light, the International Working Groups that met over the last two years see much to be gained through greater coordination among the College’s centers of international energy. If brought into deeper conversation with each other, our many international strengths can provide a distinctive, integrated matrix for global learning, one that acknowledges the interdisciplinary nature of global learning today, blends learning done both within and beyond the classroom, provides interested students in all majors with disciplinarily-relevant global learning pathways, and asserts that global learning is particularly advanced by the intensive dialogue and self-reflection intrinsic to liberal arts colleges, especially ones as diverse as Bryn Mawr.

To this end, this Plan envisions an approach to global learning that rests not on a single office or center, but a network among many. This is an unusual, perhaps even unique, approach. Most colleges and universities are interested in spreading global learning broadly across their institutions, yet assign this goal to a single office. This Plan, however, proposes an organizational structure that reflects the goal itself – an institution-wide network, drawing together many sources of global learning for mutual growth and transformation.

The benefits of such a college-wide network are many:
- enabling new international initiatives to arise organically from on-going, College-wide conversations
- making the College’s exceptional international strengths more widely known and readily accessible, both internally and externally
- connecting the global learning done in one part of a student’s trajectory with that done in another (also with those parts of the trajectory that are not explicitly global)
- making the inherently interdisciplinary nature of global learning manifest, while also articulating the particular relevance and nature of global learning for each discipline
- sharing knowledge and developing a College-wide body of expertise on theories and pedagogies of global learning
- identifying interests that span departments and offices, with the potential for developing collaborative projects
- placing global learning within the context of the College’s diversity initiatives
- connecting global learning with the College’s sustainability initiatives
- integrating curriculum and co-curriculum, theory and application, research and community engagement as mutually supportive aspects of global learning
- seeing the globally diverse nature of the student body and the intensive conversations inherent in the liberal arts college model as key sources of global learning
• building a College-wide set of international partnerships and networks that create strong platforms for international collaboration, starting with international faculty and faculty engaged in international research who are already at Bryn Mawr.
• providing a process for responding to new international possibilities and invitations
• reducing unnecessary duplication, finding cost and time efficiencies, and streamlining procedures

Ultimately this distributed but linked approach will make global learning a pervasive and defining characteristic of a Bryn Mawr education. It provides the framework needed for our graduates, at all levels and across all fields, to pursue the integrated global learning they need to pursue lives and careers in a profoundly shared world – learning that brings the insights of the liberal arts to bear on pressing global issues, raises considerations of both local and global responsibility, illuminates the international dimensions of various professions, connects theoretical analysis with practical application, and enhances student abilities to collaborate across boundaries of all sorts.

This approach also foregrounds international dialogue and collaboration as key elements of Bryn Mawr’s approach to global learning, in both how the College develops its international priorities and how students learn. It brings international voices into the intensive conversations vital to liberal learning, with the goal of broadening thinking, providing new perspectives on disciplinary knowledge, honing skills of cross-cultural interaction, and enabling students to graduate with a range of international and domestic networks already in place.

In short, this approach outlines a powerful model for integrated global learning, establishes an organizational structure that supports – even embodies - this model, and builds on existing and exceptional institutional strengths. The model asserts the primacy of liberal arts disciplines in providing the theories, epistemologies, language competencies, cultural understandings, and knowledge structures that can make sense of a dramatically changing global environment. It understands global learning as inherently interdisciplinary and builds the linkages this requires. It also builds the linkages that enable students to move from theory to application, understand how global learning relates to the professions they will pursue upon graduation, and construct their own senses of global responsibility and citizenship. And it articulates why the community-building, dialogue, and self-reflection at the philosophical core of liberal arts colleges are particularly important for global learning, not easily duplicated at larger institutions, and especially rich when there is a globally diverse student body.

Few institutions can match Bryn Mawr in all dimensions of this model, and even fewer have articulated such a model in the first place. The model builds on what we already do well, demonstrates the College’s thoughtfulness and creativity with respect to global learning, and gives Bryn Mawr distinctive positioning in attracting students who seek to develop the global competencies they need for the 21st century.

This Plan directly also aligns with the Strategic Directions now being defined for Bryn Mawr, especially in the goal of graduating students “prepared to live, work and lead in a global context through strong, mediated pathways that engage them through scholarship and action.”
Global Learning, U.S. Diversity, and the Focus of this Action Plan
This Plan focuses on what the College might do with respect to one particular aspect of global learning (enabling students to comprehend and navigate the world beyond their own nations), but it understands this work as part of a larger project.

As the International Working Group concerned with curriculum put it last fall:

global learning enables [students] to develop an increased sense of our interconnectedness…[It includes learning focused] on historical or contemporary ideas or empirical reality in particular nations…[It] provides students with broad knowledge of the … interrelationships between the US and the world…[And it pays] close attention to diversity of race/ethnicity, gender and social class and how the intersection of these and other identity factors affects the experiences of individuals and groups at home as well as around the globe. (IWG on Internationalization in the Curriculum, November 12, 2014)

The topics assembled under this definition of global learning are intrinsically related. In this light, this Plan’s focus on understanding the world beyond one’s own borders should not be construed as standing apart from efforts to understand diversity at home. Neither the broader world nor the home front can be understood without reference to each other (just as what constitutes “home” is a contingent and moving target).

The Action Plan
The 15 years of College-wide discussion leading to this Plan are given in the Appendix. In summer 2015, these efforts, and especially the recent work of four faculty-staff International Working Groups, led the President’s Office to develop a draft Action Plan. The draft was presented at the September 16 faculty meeting, followed by three separate meetings for further discussion, attended by some 20 faculty. Input was also sought from administrative offices and the International Working Groups. The result is the revised Plan presented here.

The Plan proposes establishing an International Coordinating Council (ICC) with three Subcommittees as the structure needed for Bryn Mawr to regularize its on-going discussion of international activities and pursue the integrated global learning described in the first section of this document. The Plan also identifies key issues and initiatives these groups should consider as they take up their work, recognizing that some of these activities are already under way.

1) International Coordinating Council (ICC)

The ICC will be the overarching body charged with taking a broad, cross-institutional view of the College’s international work. Its primary function will be to think comprehensively about the overall nature and impact of the College’s global learning efforts. To this end, the ICC will collect and share information on these efforts, consider issues that cross-cut them, suggest ways they might support or intersect with each other, propose or deliberate possible new initiatives, and respond to challenges the College faces with respect to global learning.
The ICC will both oversee and be supported by the work of the three Subcommittees. It will also liaise with departments and offices across the campus. And it will periodically develop proposals that are forwarded to relevant bodies for deliberation and decision.

ICC membership will draw from the President’s, Provost’s, and Dean’s Offices; faculty involved in global learning, English as a Second Language, and/or faculty governance; and staff involved in study abroad, internships, international student support, diversity initiatives, enrollment management, and institutional development.

The ICC will be led by a Convener, who organizes meetings, develops agendas, serves as the go-to person for the College’s international work, integrates the work of the ICC and its Subcommittees, and relays ICC discussions and proposals to various constituencies. During 2015-16, Susan Sutton, from the President’s Office, will serve as ICC Convener. As she moves toward retirement at the end of this academic year, the Provost’s Office will develop a half-time ICC Convener position to be filled by a Bryn Mawr faculty member, in order to take advantage of faculty expertise and to place the College’s academic mission at the center of our international efforts. The faculty member will be released from two courses and given administrative support. Salary savings from Sutton’s current position will fund this shift, as well as some of the other initiatives proposed in this Plan.

Over the next three years, the ICC will do the following, (as well as other projects that may arise).

a. Continue the work of the International Working Groups in assembling information on Bryn Mawr’s international activities, assessing the College’s progress on the proposals found in this Plan, and considering what else might be done.

b. Explore ways of supporting the international research and other work of faculty, students and departments, with the understanding that such incentives and support will vary according to the needs of particular departments, faculty and students; the possibility of a fund to support international research as well as exchanges and international visitors will be part of these explorations.

c. Evaluate the College’s international relationships, including study abroad programs, internship hosts, and institutional partnerships with the goal of identifying a more limited number that most benefit students and faculty, as well as policies and procedures for building on faculty connections and making decisions concerning possible new institutional partnerships.

d. Serve as a sounding board for new international opportunities and initiatives that may arise.

e. Advise on development of a Global Bryn Mawr webpage that pulls together (and links to) the full range of the College’s international work (this work is already under way). Consider ways to feature the international research and connections of our faculty and students.

f. Periodically report its findings and deliberations to faculty, staff, and students.

g. Take up other issues raised by the three International Subcommittees.
The ICC will have three Subcommittees, each of which brings together individuals responsible for a particular closely-related set of international activities, thereby fostering regular communication and coordination in the College’s operational approach to these domains of international work. Some Subcommittee members will also belong to the ICC; some will not. Conversely, not all members of the ICC will be on a Subcommittee. The ICC Convener will be an ex-officio member of all three Subcommittees. Subcommittees will report regularly to the ICC and present proposals for the ICC as a whole to consider (and forward to the appropriate body, when needed).

2) Subcommittee on Overseas Study and Engagement

This Subcommittee will pursue a comprehensive approach to the College’s many forms of study abroad and overseas experience. Its membership will be drawn from the Study Abroad Office, LILAC, 360° program, Avignon and Russian programs, and relevant departments across the College. Over the next three years, the Subcommittee will do the following, (as well as other projects that may arise).

a) Produce a consolidated list of all overseas and internationally-oriented study away options, including 360° clusters, travel during regular courses, internships, and other field experiences.

b) Explore ways of expanding the College’s education abroad options beyond JYA. Consider expanding the 360° program, continuing the current format of semester-long clusters with an embedded overseas component but exploring new formats that include longer overseas components (e.g., in the summer or over winter break) and that involve disciplines for which study abroad has been unusual or difficult. Support faculty and departments in developing faculty-led programs. Stress the importance of curricular embeddedness (before, after, and during) for such programs.

c) Propose education abroad options that might serve both graduate students and students in majors for which study abroad has been difficult.

d) Continue the work already underway to develop, support and promote a small but strong set of summer overseas study, research, or civic engagement programs for students.

e) Complete the process already underway of developing health & safety policies and procedures for all College-sponsored student travel abroad, including consideration of when circumstances might warrant some flexibility in applying restrictions.

f) Continue the process already underway of evaluating different financial models for study abroad, including the possibility of setting targets for JYA destinations, costs, and numbers; increasing direct exchanges; supporting new summer, winter break, and other non-JYA programming; and culling the list of existing options.

g) Explore strategies for greater integration of study abroad with the on-campus curriculum.

h) Continue the work already begun by LILAC and the Dean’s Office of providing programming to prepare and support students before, during, and after their overseas experiences, including guiding them in reflection and in connecting these experiences to their on-campus academic programs.
i) Explore developing a few key partnerships, sites, and programs as platforms/incubators for sustained, multidisciplinary international engagement. Similar to, and possibly working with, the Center for Peace and Global Citizenship at Haverford.

3) Subcommittee on International Curricular Initiatives
This Subcommittee will explore possibilities for enabling interested departments to develop international pathways for their students and linking departments for interdisciplinary endeavors. Its membership will be drawn from the Provost's Office, Curriculum Committee, 360° program, Academic Technology Initiatives, International Studies program, and interested departments from across the College. Over the next three years, the Subcommittee will do the following, (as well as other projects that may arise).

   a. Develop (and perhaps start implementing) a plan to support departments or schools interested in developing discipline-specific global learning goals and curricular pathways for their students, including study abroad and international internship & research options that can be integrated with on-campus coursework.
   b. Explore strategies for greater integration of study abroad (in all its forms) with the on-campus curriculum, including such possibilities as assisting departments or schools in identifying appropriate options/programs for their students, supporting faculty from these departments in connecting with these programs, and allowing overseas work to count toward requirements for the major.
   c. Continue the process already underway of analyzing current enrollment patterns to determine the number and nature of internationally focused courses that Bryn Mawr students take, in order to understand, assess, and showcase the extent of international learning that now occurs at the College, and to identify clusters of courses that indicate student interest and might be further developed as special tracks.
   d. Pursue possibilities for high quality 4+1 programs with international partner institutions that enable undergraduates to pursue a year of international Master’s Level work upon completion of their Bryn Mawr degree (such as the current program in China Studies with Zhejiang University).
   e. Promote opportunities and programs that enable our students to understand their own gendered lives in global perspective, carrying forward the historic Bryn Mawr mission of preparing young women who will advance gender equity through both their own achievements and their social activism, and who understand the ways in which this is now a global project benefitting from global dialogue and collaboration.
   f. Develop a plan for bringing international scholars into our classrooms through faculty exchange (both short and long-term), Fulbright and similar programs, and collaborative online teaching with partner institutions and organizations. Build on recent faculty-initiated pilot projects that employed co-teaching and curricular collaboration with their colleagues overseas, both face-to-face and virtual.
   g. In conversation with the Provost’s Office, Committee on Appointments, and the faculty, consider how international work might be better supported and evaluated at the College.

4) Subcommittee on International Students
This Subcommittee will strengthen campus programming to support BMC’s international student population and enhance on-campus international dialogue. Its membership will be drawn from the Dean’s Office, Pensby Center, Health Center, English as a Second Language program, Residential Life, Dining Services, LILAC and interested faculty. Over the next three years, the Subcommittee will do the following, (as well as other projects that may arise).

a. Make the linkage between international and U.S. diversity explicit by developing the initiatives proposed in this Plan in conversation with and support of the College’s overall diversity efforts.

b. Develop an international component for the Dorm Leadership Training program.

c. Explore ways to sustain StoryCORE and/or similar programs that stimulate cross-national conversations in Bryn Mawr dormitories, also ensuring that issues emerging from these conversations are communicated to relevant staff and faculty.

d. Consider the Winter Break needs of the international students who spend it in our dorms.

e. Develop greater expertise concerning best practices and creative ideas with respect to international diversity and residential life.

f. Evaluate the extent to which international students are thriving and succeeding at Bryn Mawr, and what might be done in cases where they are not. Particular attention needs to be paid in creating opportunities and policies that supports the particular career development needs of international students.

g. Rework the College’s programming to orient international students and facilitate their understanding of U.S. academic life.

h. Continue to explore ways that our internationally diverse community can provide distinctive and unusual opportunities for dialogue and mutual growth, both in the classroom and beyond.

i. Continue to provide and expand professional development opportunities for faculty, deans, and staff with respect to working with international students.

5) Other Initiatives

Three international initiatives, already underway and under the direction of specific units, will also contribute to the goals outlined in this plan.

a. Enhance international alumnae/i networks and engagement with the College through data collection, network building, digital strategies and engagement with LILAC programs. To be led by the Alumnae Office, President’s Office, Development Office, and LILAC.

b. Establish international student enrollment management strategies, with a particular eye toward diversifying the international student population at the College. To be led by the Enrollment Office.

c. As made possible by the Campaign through a generous bequest, hire faculty for two new internationally-oriented positions (broadly defined and open in terms of field). Positions to be approved and awarded through the Committee on Academic Priorities.
While the work projected by this Plan is extensive, it will be balanced in several ways.

- The focus, priorities, cross-college integration, and leadership provided by this structure.
- Elimination of unnecessary duplication of international tasks.
- Possible dissolution of some existing committees and ad hoc meetings, as such work is subsumed under this structure.
- Administrative support deriving from a defined Convener position and the assistance provided by the Provost’s Office.
- Capacity-building that will facilitate and enhance the College’s future global learning efforts.
Appendix: The Steps That Led to This Action Plan

International education has a long history at Bryn Mawr. Early students, for example, were required to study four languages, while the College developed strong connections in Japan, Greece, and Italy in the first quarter of the 20th century and followed with the summer program in Avignon in 1962 and the Russian flagship program a little later. Current patterns of globalization, the increasing internationalization of scholarship, and growing global mobility of students have, however, led the College to look at what it is doing with fresh eyes. This Plan is the latest step in 15 years of discussions on this topic.

These efforts began with establishment of the Center on International Studies in 2000, a development which led to an undergraduate minor in International Studies in 2005 and a major in 2012. This was followed by inclusion of “a globally focused curriculum” as a key element of 2012’s Plan for Bryn Mawr, an item which then morphed into #3 of the College’s Four Priorities for 2013-15: “Nurturing Globally Successful and Engaged Students.”

To move forward on this priority, in 2013-14 President Cassidy charged four International Working Groups (IWGs) with recommending strategic international directions for the College. The four groups were 1) Engaging Students Beyond Bryn Mawr, 2) the International Student Experience, 3) Curriculum Internationalization, and 4) Voices for Global Women’s Advancement.

President Cassidy issued a call for IWG volunteers in mid-fall 2013. The groups were announced at faculty and staff meetings in January 2014. Each IWG was composed of faculty and staff with particular interest and expertise in that group’s focus. Each held monthly meetings through December 2014.

The IWGs took stock of the College’s current activities with respect to their topics, read relevant literature, and invited others to attend meetings. Two conducted surveys of faculty, staff, and/or students. One brought in visiting experts from other institutions. Each wrote a lengthy report covering its findings and recommendations, sent to faculty and staff on November 19, 2014. Comments and suggestions were invited. The reports were also discussed at the December 10, 2014 Faculty Meeting.

Following suggestions from that meeting, the IWG conveners met several times in spring 2015 to pull together and prioritize the many recommendations of the individual reports. This resulted in a consolidated report, Global Learning in a Shared World, in March 2015. This report was circulated to faculty and staff, and also discussed at the May 15, 2015 Faculty Meeting.

Following all these discussions, in summer 2015, the President’s Office developed a draft Action Plan. The draft was presented at the September 16, 2015 faculty meeting, followed by three separate meetings for further discussion, attended by some 20 faculty. Input was also sought from administrative offices and the International Working Groups. The result is the revised Plan presented here.